

Utilizing the Medical Legal Partnership Model to Provide Legal Services Improving Outcomes for RWHAP Patients

Presented by:

The Ryan White Legal Project

Dan Kahle, Attorney

Amy McGrath, Paralegal

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NATIONAL
RYAN WHITE
CONFERENCE
ON HIV CARE & TREATMENT

Who We Are



- Indiana Legal Services, Inc.
 - Founded in 1966
 - Largest non-profit law firm in Indiana
 - Serve entire state
 - Serving low-income clients with a variety of civil legal issues
- Closed 14,758 cases in 2021

Our Funding

- Majority of our funding comes from LSC ¹
- We also have numerous grants that fund specialized projects intended to address the needs of specific communities
 - Medical Legal Partnerships fall into this category
 - ILS currently has 13 MLPs
 - Ryan White Legal Project



What is a Medical Legal Partnership?



A collaboration that brings legal and medical teams together to provide free civil legal services to low-income individuals

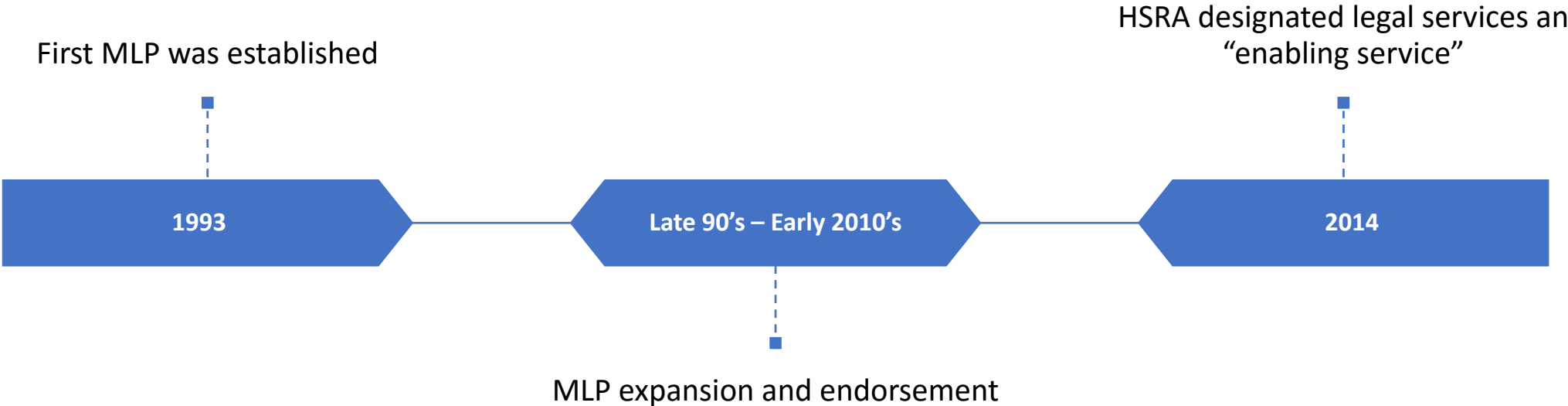


Goal is to address civil legal issues that can affect patient health and engagement in treatment



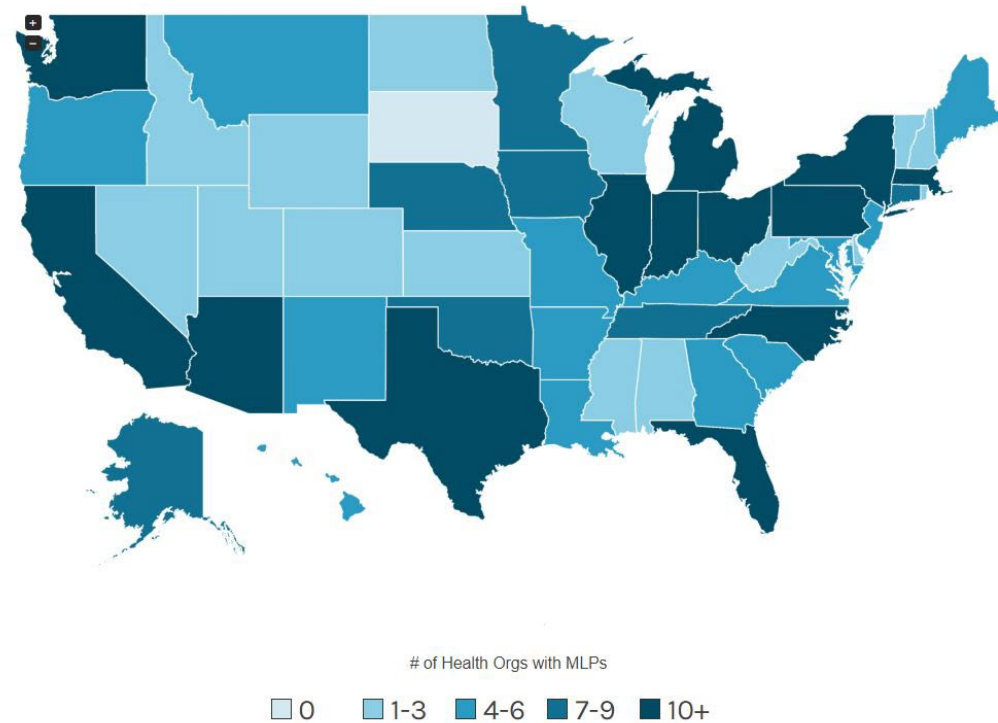
Medical and legal professionals can more effectively address barriers to healthy outcomes by working together

Brief History



MLPs Today

- Today there are more than 450 MLPs across the country ²
- Range from general (serving all patients) to specific client populations
 - RWLP is an example of an MLP that serves a specific client population – People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA)



Source: <https://medical-legalpartnership.org/partnerships/>

Why do we need MLPs?



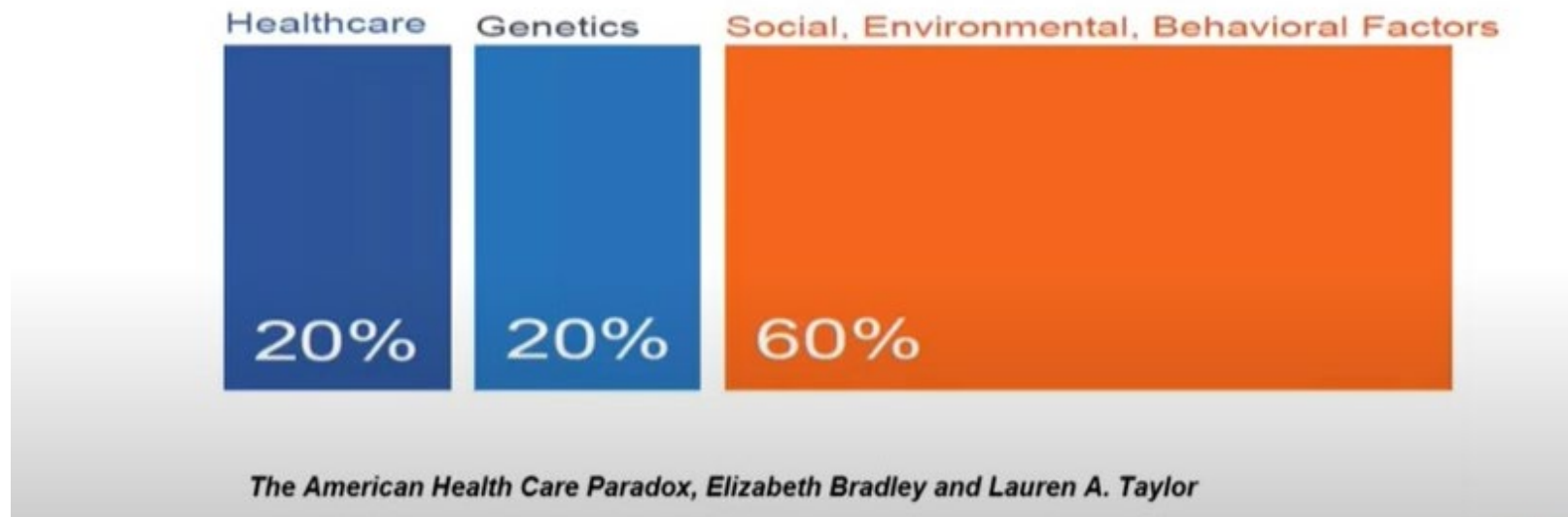
Clinical presentation often does not convey the entirety of issues affecting an individual's health

Example:
Guardianship

Factors Contributing to Health

- “Health” is not limited to a medical context

Determinants of Health



Social Determinants of Health

- Social determinants of health are broadly defined as the conditions under which people are born, grow, live, work, and age
- Some of the most important SDOHs that impact health:
 - Access to Medical Care
 - Access to Nutritious Food
 - Access to Clean Water
 - Functioning Utilities
- Legal barriers can have a negative impact on these SDOHs and MLPs try to eliminate these barriers

Typical MLP Process



Training of Healthcare Professionals



Identifying issues during visits



Referral to MLP



Lawyers evaluate and provide appropriate assistance

Spotting the Issues

- Many vulnerable individuals and families have civil legal issues that are not adequately addressed
 - 86% of reported issues received inadequate or no legal help ³
- Health care settings provide a unique opportunity to identify potential legal issues
- People often trust their doctor more than a lawyer



Do MLP's work?

- Positive Effects:
 - Less stress / improved mental health
 - Stable housing
 - Savings in healthcare costs
 - Access to greater financial resources ⁴
- All of these effects contribute to a greater engagement in treatment
 - Crucial for PLWHA

Ryan White Legal Project with ILS

- We are an MLP within Indiana Legal Services that partners with the Indiana Department of Health to exclusively serve clients that are eligible for Ryan White Part B services*
- Founded in 2019
- Serve the entire state of Indiana



* The Ryan White Legal Project is a program of the Indiana Department of Health. We are funded in whole or in part by State and Federal allocations through the Indiana Department of Health.

How we utilize MLP model

- Slightly different than prototypical MLP:
 - Partnered with multiple health organizations rather than one
 - Referrals come from the non-medical case managers (NMCM) rather than medical clinics
- Benefits of our Model:
 - NMCM insight
 - Collaboration with NMCM

Types of Cases We Handle

The RWLP provides services involving legal matters related to or arising from HIV disease

Estate Planning

- Last Will and Testament
- Powers of Attorney
- Advance Directives
- Living Wills

Public Benefits

- SSI/SSDI
- Unemployment
- SNAP Benefits

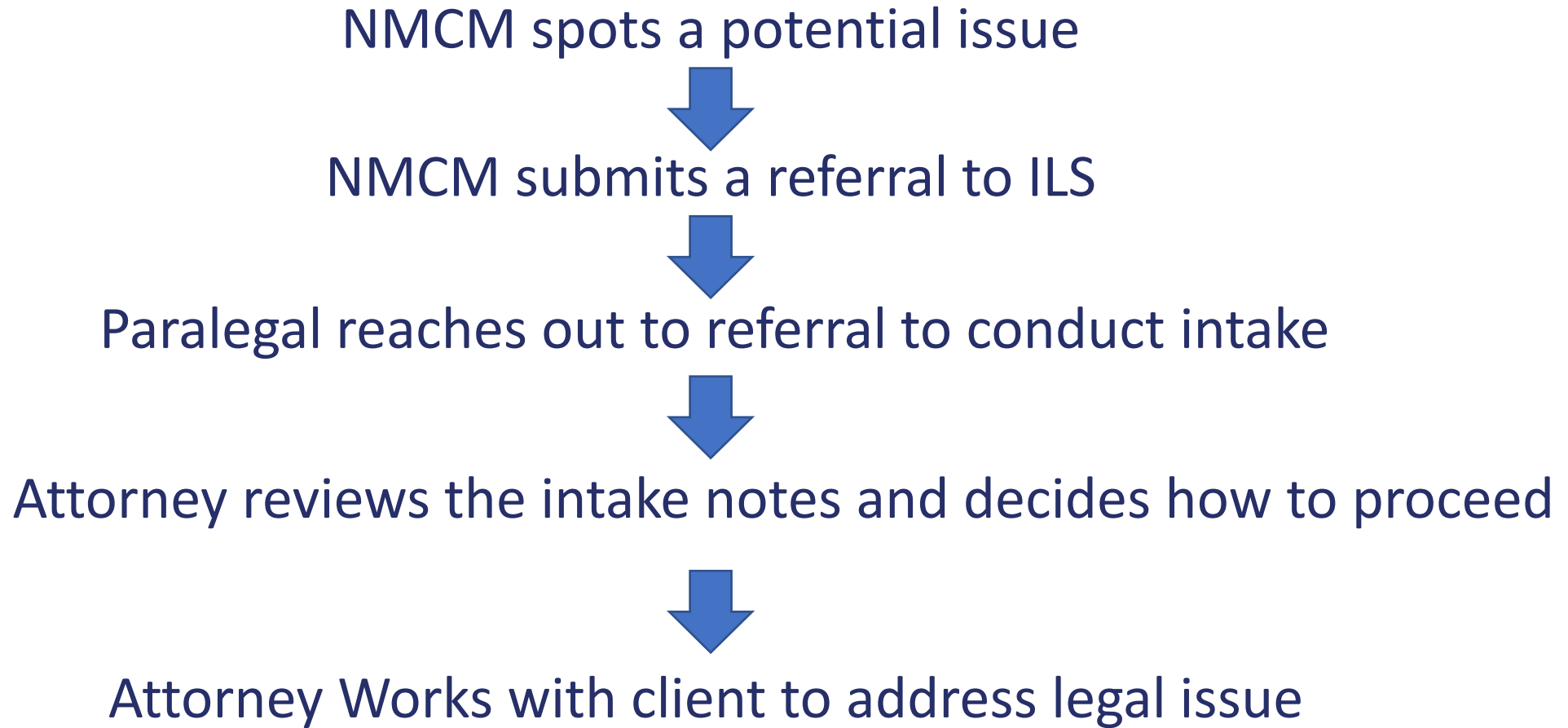
Discrimination or Breach of Confidentiality

- Housing
- Employment

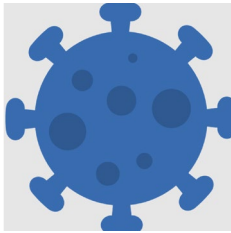
Other

- Name and Gender Marker Changes
- Permanency Planning for Minor Children

How We Handle a Case



Challenges Faced by RWLP



COVID-19

Able to navigate with technology



Knowledge about the Project

Education and spreading awareness



Lack of client engagement

Coordinating with NMCM

Interested in Starting an MLP?

- Contact local legal aid societies in your region
 - That's how our project started!
- National Center for Medical Legal Partnership
 - <https://medical-legalpartnership.org>
- How to start an MLP
 - <https://medical-legalpartnship.org/download/healthcenter-toolkit/>

References

1. <https://www.lsc.gov/about-lsc/who-we-are>
2. Numbers according to National Center for Medical Legal Partnership:
<https://medical-legalpartnership.org/partnerships/> #GH-HS
3. LEGAL AID INTERAGENCY ROUNDTABLE, ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN THE AGE OF COVID19: A ROUNDTABLE REPORT 1, 13 (2021).
4. <https://medical-legalpartnership.org/impact/>

Questions?

- **Dan Kahle**

- Staff Attorney
- Ryan White Legal Project
- Indiana Legal Services
- daniel.kahle@ilsis.net

- **Amy McGrath**

- Paralegal
- Ryan White Legal Project
- Indiana Legal Services
- amy.mcgrath@ilsis.net